(c) With a view to reduce post harvest losses of fruits and vegetables, Government have taken several measures, such as:—

(i) The National Horticulture Board has been provided Rs. 200 crores during VIII Plan period for establishment of post harvest infrastructure like pre-cooling, ultra high humidity storages, grading packing centres, improved and refrigerated transportation and processing through integrated project on management of post harvest infra structure of horticulture crups and development of marketing of horticulture produce through participation in soft loan schemes. Similar assistance is provided by National Cooperative Development Corporation to the Cooperatives.

(ii) In order to encourage larger processing of fruits and vegetables, the Govt, have removed excise duty on all fruits and vegetables, allowed automatic approval for technology and marketing arrangements with foreign companies on payment of technology fee upto Rs. 1 crore and royalty of 5% for domestic sale and for export upto 8%

(iii) Reduced excise duties and customs duties on capital goods for fruits and vegetables processing industry, as well as refrigeration and other equipments.

(iv) Provided encouragement to export by making the export earning tax free for a period of five years, allowed 100% Export Oriented Units for agro food industries to sell upto 50% in Domestic Tariff Area, allowed duty concessions under Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, allowed import of capital goods for fruits and vegetable processing industry. Besides Ministry of Food Processing Industry formulated various Plan schemes for encouraging fruits and vegetables processing industry.

Vicld of Foodgrains and Cash Crops in North-Eastern Region

5634. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the performance of North-Eastern Region so far as yield of foodgrains and cash crops is concerned; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to increase the yield of foodgrains and cash crops in this region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Paddy is the major foodgrain crop of the North-Eastern region. The rate of growth of yield of paddy during the period 1980-81 to 1993-94 has been significantly high in most of the States except Arunachal Pradesh where it was low and Meghalaya which has shown a decline in yield in recent period.

The performance of cash crops in respect of yield is satisfactory.

(b) For increasing production and productivity of cereal crops in Nortu-Eastcrn region, a centrally sponsored Integrated Cereal Development Programme in Rice Based cropping system areas (ICDP-Rice) is being continued. For commercial crops Special Jute Development Programme is being implemented. A scheme for Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System is being proposed during the remaining part of the 8th Five Year Plan.

National Agricultural Technology Project

5635. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning